6.0 Pesticides Workgroup

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Progress Toward Challenge Goals

United States Challenge: "Confirm by 1998 that there is no longer use or release from sources that enter the Great Lakes Basin of five bioaccumulative pesticides (chlordane, aldrin/dieldrin, DDT, mirex, and toxaphene).... If ongoing, long range sources of these substances from outside of the U.S. are confirmed, work within international frameworks to reduce or phase out releases of these substances"

Canadian Challenge: "Report by 1997, that there is no longer use, generation or release from Ontario sources that enter the Great Lakes of five bioaccumulative pesticides (chlordane, aldrin/dieldrin, DDT, mirex, and toxaphene).... If ongoing, long range sources of these substances from outside of Canada are confirmed, work within international frameworks to reduce or phase out releases of these substances."

The Canadian Challenge report was issued in 1997, concluding that the Challenge for Canada has been met.

The final U.S. Challenge report was posted on the GLBTS website on September 29, 2000. The report concludes that the U.S. has met the principal intent of the Challenge, even though the goal of confirming that there is "no longer use or release" cannot be attained as long as unused stocks and contaminated sites exist.

The Pesticides Workgroup has reached a state of near completion with respect to the Level I pesticides (aldrin, chlordane, DDT & metabolites, dieldrin, mirex, and toxaphene). Canada and the U.S. have both issued reports covering the four-step process. Briefly, in both countries, all uses of the Level I pesticides have been canceled, the pesticides were never produced in Canada, and the production facilities in the U.S. have all been closed. Remaining reduction activities are the ongoing waste pesticide collections (clean sweeps) and remediation of contaminated sites containing the pesticides.

Workgroup Activities and the 4-Step Process

Last year the workgroup considered the pollution prevention opportunities of the Level II pesticides (endrin, heptachlor, lindane and HCH, pentachlorophenol, and tributyl tin). Endrin has been long cancelled, and no domestic manufacturing exists. The production of heptachlor in the U.S. ceased in 1997, and the remaining registrations (only for fire ant control in closed electrical boxes) have been allowed to lapse. Heptachlor was discontinued in Canada in 1985. Lindane and tributyl tin are still in use, but under review by the pesticide regulatory agencies in Canada and the U.S. In Canada, the use of organotin antifouling paints is scheduled for prohibition by January 1, 2003. There is no indication that hexachlorocyclohexane was ever registered for use as a pesticide in Canada. Pentachlorophenol has a principal and significant use in the treatment of utility poles. A report of the findings of the re-registration review by the Pesticide Regulatory Agencies of Canada and U.S., originally expected this year, has been delayed, and an optimistic expected date of completion is late 2002.

Reduction Activities

Canada and the U.S. have been active in negotiating the phase out of DDT use in Mexico and Central

America, and the U.S. Office of Pesticide Programs has supplied $150,000 to the United Nations for efforts with Persistent Organic Pollutant (POPs) negotiations, for POPs implementation, and for efforts to prevent stockpiling of obsolete pesticides.

Clean sweep collections continue in the U.S., with the State of Michigan reporting collections of 60,218 pounds of waste pesticides so far this year. The collections included the following quantities of toxic chemicals of interest to the GLBTS: 1,036 pounds of chlordane, 570 pounds of DDT, 672 pounds of dieldrin, 986 pounds of mercury and mercury compounds, 251 pounds of pentachlorophenol, 534 pounds of lindane, 609 pounds of methoxychlor and 926 pounds of lead arsenate.

The Crop Protection Institute of Canada and its federal and provincial partners collected approximately 51,015 liters and 28,428 kg of waste pesticides in Ontario in 2000. The collections included the following quantities of toxic chemicals of interest to the GLBTS: 45 liters and 162 kg of aldrin, 83 liters and 68 kg of chlordane, 956 liters and 5,351 kg of DDT, 62 liters and 120 kg of endrin, and 24 liters and 64 kg of lindane. Collections are currently underway for 2001.

In addition to the revaluation of heavy-duty wood preservatives, Canada is undertaking lifecycle management of toxic substances, including pentachlorophenol, from wood preservative manufacturing, wood preservation facilities, treated-wood use (industrial and consumer based), and management of treated-wood waste. All wood treatment facilities that do not meet the Technical Recommendations outlined in the Wood Preservation Sector Strategic Options Report must submit implementation plans by the end of December 2001. A "*National Strategy for the Management of Post-Use Preservative Treated Industrial Wood*" document was prepared in March 2001, with the short-term objective of a 20 percent decrease of waste sent to landfill by 2005, based on a 1990 baseline.

Hat Point, Minnesota in Spring
Photograph by Patrick T. Collins, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources